

✓ SOMETHING *only this* &  
WRITTEN

After the manner of a

Discourse or Dialogue

Betwixt a Rigid

PRIESTBITERIAN

And Good

Conscience,

Which begins to be roused  
up and awakened these

TRYING TIMES.

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*by M<sup>r</sup>. Colton.*

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disturber of Magistracy and Ministry, and all manner of evil that could be spoken by me, even as when thou knewest me, did not then mine enemies who were high, and full, and fat, and proud, and made no conscience, did not they then so deal with me, call to remembrance.

*Pr.* But what dost thou think now Conscience, what will become of our Religion now, we must read the Service Book, and turn again to our old vomit in every thing, and that which is much to be feared, to that which is worse then ever it was.

*Conf.* Well what are you not pleased now there is an Act for Uniformity in Religion, have you not long desired it, that you might crush such as you call Hereticks and Schismaticks, and bring them back again, and are you not pleased now there is an Act, and also an Act against the Quakers?

*Pr.* But we never intended to set up this Religion, which we have so long called Antichristian and Popish, but to have established Priestbiterie in its puritie, and according to the example of the best reformed Churches, and so to bring all others to a conformity to that.

*Conf.* You never intended it, but now it

it is intended ; What think you now, Is it nothing for you to have a yolk made for your Consciences, would not liberty of Conscience be now acceptable to you, and is it an easie thing now for you to suffer for your Consciences, who were so eager to make others suffer for their Consciences.

*Pr. A ye but they held error and blasphemy, and were disturbers of Ministry, and troublers of the Nation, denyed Tythes and dues, &c.*

*Cons.* Did not the Bishops say as much by you, when they ruled over you, while you held acquaintance with me, and endeavoured to keep your conscience void of offence, did they not pretend the same things against you, as you did against those whom you call Hereticks, &c. And didst thou not say, you would have set up Priestbiterie in its purity, and according to the example of the best reformed Churches, then was not the Church in the Apostles dayes, the most purest, and was not their example chiefly to be followed, and then was it not reason and good conscience to detain Tythes, since it could not be proved by their example or practise,

and was it not reason and good conscience, to separate from you, when you had separated your selves from good conscience, and became persecuters of him, and were for the most part given up to your own hearts lust, in pride, self-exaltation, avarice, cruelty, idolatry and uncleanness, and yet cry the Church, the Ordinances, as these do now, whom you'l not conform to, and were you not as cruel as these can be to you, let *England* and *New-England* witness.

*Priest.* But Conscience this was thy manner still, thou wouldest judge us, and thou wert to precise in many things, we could never well away with thy strictnesse to the Apostles Rule and Practise, thou wilt have every thing proved by Scriptures and lay aside our ancient Fathers, and other godly mens Comentaries, who did as we do after the Church was seiled, and Persecution ceased.

*Con.* Am I indeed too strict for you, and is not this Religion loose enough, and do you like neither, and yet hate them which do? will you call the Scriptures the Word of God and the Rule, and yet leave them and fly to ancient Fathers



Fathers Rules, Words and Works, who in many things followed their own corrupt wills and carnal reason, and in this you also follow in what may suite with your own ease and profits, preferment and worldly honours, and so the Crosse of Christ is ceased to you, and you are become lovers of your selves, and of pleasures, and not deniers of your selves, and so are blinded, and quite forget good conscience, as they did who after the Church was settled (as thou sayest) and persecution ceased, did erre from the truth, and good conscience, and set up their own rules, inventions and traditions, and these have ever since been followed, under the names of Church and Ordinances, and whoever have kept to the Apostles rule, and kept a good conscience, were persecuted by them who held the traditions and were mixed with the worlds interest.

*Priest. But now thou seest we are like to be sufferers for our Consciences as well as others, are we not, what shall we do?*

*Con. Nay, stay you are not yet sufferers for a good conscience in the sight of God, but for evil doing, what though you may suffer a few of you for the profession*

fession of Religion, yet that may not be  
 for good conscience neither, for though  
 your suffering may be inflicted upon you  
 by men, yet you must know that God  
 hath a hand in these things, and there  
 was first a cause in you, that did provoke  
 the Lord to bring these enemies upon  
 you, and to take you as captives, and  
 this is not come upon you as suffering  
 for good conscience, from the hand of  
 God, to exercise you for the tryal of  
 your faith, but as a judgement from  
 God for former disobedience, and there-  
 fore you have yet good conscience to  
 seek, though you may retain your pro-  
 fession of Religion, and suffer as Israel  
 did in Babylon, yet were they lead cap-  
 tive into Babylon for their sins, which you  
 also have been warned of often, for se-  
 veral years past, but refused to repent,  
 and therefore is this evil come upon you,  
 and not for good conscience, and this  
 you must be thoroughly sensible of, before  
 ever a remedy be found.

Priest. But had we ever Prophets as Is-  
 rael had, what though a company of giddy  
 brained people came like mad folks to disturb  
 us, and bid us repent, and judge us, and call  
 us deceivers, and blind guides and such like,  
 was



*was this warning from the Lord?*

*Con.* Yes if you could have made good use of them, if envy, wrath and bitterness of spirit had not filled your minds, you might well have taken it so, and improved it to your advantage, and that for these reasons. First, because they reproved you for the same things, which the true Prophets reproved the false, as of teaching for hire, greedy of filthy lucre, divining for money, running after *Baalams* error, having the chief place in the Assembly, uppermost rooms at Feasts, going in long robes, and called Master, with divers other things even as they did, which practises (though covered with pretences) you were guilty of. Secondly, your dealing with them was just as the false Prophets, High-Priests, Scribes and Pharisees did with the true Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, the same terms of reproach and falsehood as was given them, as Deceivers, Seducers, Blasphemers, turners of the World upside down, bringers in of new Sects, Mad men, with divers such like, even as they did; and were you not blind you saw not this, and then stir up Rulers, Souldiers, False witnesses even as they did,

did, with the rude Multitude, to revile,  
 false accuse, imprison, slander, murder  
 and destroy even as they did; Nay  
 might not Baalam and his Asses have re-  
 proved your madness as exceeding his,  
 how fiercely did he strike the poor Ass,  
 because he went not forward, so greedy  
 was he for reward, that if he had had a  
 sword he would have killed him, but he  
 saw not the Angel, which the poor, de-  
 spised, beaten Ass saw, that stood in his  
 way to have destroyed him; was it not  
 thus with you who though sometimes  
 your foot as it were was crushed, and  
 your head broken, yet you would not be  
 turned, but go on, even head-long to  
 your destruction, and so you digged a  
 pit for others, and your selves are fallen  
 therein, and in the snare that your selves  
 have laid, is your own foot trapped, and  
 now cry out of persecution for consci-  
 ence, while indeed you are not come to  
 conscience yet, for this is Gods venge-  
 ance, and so you must take it, and re-  
 pent, or you will be utterly destroyed for  
 ever; for alas, had you considered these  
 people, though you had not believed  
 that God sent them, yet you might have  
 believed, that God suffered them, and  
 that

that for to reprove you, and for this reason you might have searched your camp, to have found out the accursed thing amongst your selves, that it might have been put from you, that so the plague might have been stayed; and now though the very same things which they speak of, are come upon many already, and are every day hastening to their fulfilling, can you yet believe that you were warned, and that these things are come upon you justly, for your Cruelty and Oppression towards them, your Blood-thirstiness, Covetousness and Pride; herein is the Scriptures fulfilled, *he hath closed their eyes that they cannot see, and hardened their hearts that they cannot understand*; and so, though you make long Prayers, and weep, and howl, and lament, yet this is but the fruit of your own doings, you are not yet come to good Conscience, and find out the cause, and purge your selves first from that which hath brought these great Judgments upon you, that you might begin upon a right foundation.

Priest. *Why Conscience, what wouldest thou have us to do? We must not Preach no longer in publick, nor Administer the Ordinances;*

vances, and if we do, then we are deeply fined or imprisoned; And if we do it in private, we do not only bring our selves in danger, but we come under our own censure, having so much condemned others for private exercising of Religion, and separating from the publick, that they will have just cause to say, That now our own Judgement of others is come upon our selves, and becomes our own case, and thus we are every way straightened.

*Conf.* Why now indeed you are tryed, the day hath overtaken you; but if you would take my advice, it will be very hard for you, for indeed you must deny your selves, and truly repent of all your hard speeches, and cruel usages, unjust imprisonments of honest innocent people, you must know and believe that these things are come upon you deservedly for cruel dealing with them; and you must own, confess, and believe that light in your Consciences which they profess and you blaspheme, that by it you may truly see the corruption, ungodliness, and impiety of your own hearts, and through it be led to Repentance, and this is hard for you, and so with them chuse to suffer for a good Conscience

Conscience rather than sin against the Law of God in your hearts for all the worlds good, and so learn to see the error of your own hearts and minds, that from it you may be delivered, and God may give you repentance and the knowledge of the Truth; and this light in your Consciences ( if you love it and obey it ) will let you see what is accepted of God, and what is rejected, and to chuse the good, and refuse the evil, and this will bring you to know what good Conscience is, and what it is to have the heart sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and to have peace with God.

*Priest. Thou tells of the Light, and this the Quakers have told us; but we have detected it as false Doctrine, Error and Delusion, and we are Gifted men, and can Preach and say, What shall become of our gifts? Shall we quite give over to Exercise them? and what shall become of our Families if we give over? May we not Conform and read some part, that so the Gospel may be preached? for otherwise the Gospel may cease to be preached?*

*Con. Thou didst ask my Advice ere while, as if thou hadst some mind to have followed it; but thou hast detected*

tested the Truth for Error, this is still  
 irksome to thy stomach; thou hast slan-  
 dered it, though thou couldest never  
 prove it, and so this is too mean for thy  
 dainty pallat to return to this and know  
 good Conscience, and thou must teach  
 others by any means though thou thy  
 self be cast away; And what is the mat-  
 ter your Families have been kept full and  
 rich, and proud and lofty, finely array-  
 ed in silk and soft linnen, and your  
 Children bred in idleness, pride, wan-  
 tonness and fulness of bread, and you  
 and your Wives in your Master and Mi-  
 stris-ships, and this is a great Reason  
 that you must preach the Gospel; here  
 is the necessity, a Living, not the Gospel,  
 and your Gifts ( if they were so ) you  
 will sell, and under this deceit you will  
 do Evil that Good may come thereby;  
 but God abhors it, and you therein,  
 and where is good Conscience all this  
 while when you do that which is con-  
 trary to the light in your Consciences?  
 and thus you'l preach Faith to others,  
 while you have an evil Conscience, and  
 are void of a pure Conscience where  
 Faith is held: But I tell thee, hold fast  
 Conscience before it be utterly seared,  
 and



and come to have more acquaintance with me, and talk less of thy Gifts, but be humbled that God may exalt thee, and know thy self and wherein thou hast erred, and repent from the bottom of thy heart, and acknowledge the just hand of God, who is measuring the same measure unto you as you have measured to others, and prize liberty of Conscience, and cry down wickedness in your selves and others, and this had been good you had done long since, and have been content if one or two in a parish had not paid you because of good Conscience, which had been suitable to Self-denial and good Conscience, rather then to have been so mad and furious to get all, that now you are like to loose all, both Living and Religion too.

*Pr. Well Conscience, if this be the case, why then it is evident that if we keep a good Conscience, we must deny our selves and loose all, and take up the Cross, if we will hold our Principles, we must bear the shame of our former actions, or else if we turn, we must of necessity make shipwrack of good Conscience utterly, and become abominable hypocrites, and then we shall stink in the nostrils of honest men, we shall be hated and a scorn amongst them*

them we turn to, and no people will con-  
trust us, but our name will be cast out as abo-  
minable, we shall be a people too heavy for the  
Earth to bear because of our abominations,  
Good men will be grieved, Wicked men will  
hate us, and God will be our real enemy, and  
all people will loath the remembrance of us,  
for we have been treacherous to our friends,  
cruel to our Enemies, and in all that ever we  
have done we have sought our selves, and now  
misery is come upon us, we cannot hide our  
selves; but prethee Conscience is there not  
yet a way that we may secure our selves?

Conf. No indeed, for God is come to  
Judgement against you, and your  
own devisings hath brought this mis-  
chief upon you, and with the same  
rod that your selves have made for o-  
thers, must your own backs be beaten,  
and this is just, to whom can you fly,  
Armes will not help you, for you are  
treacherous amongst your selves, Secta-  
ries are your declared enemies, and are  
under the same condemnation with you,  
They that keep a good Conscience, they  
cannot fight with carnal weapons, they  
are given up in body and spirit to suffer-  
ing for good Conscience, and they are  
therewith content in the will of God,  
hey

they have suffered by you and under you, and they are sufferers still ; so there is no hope in man, either you must come to good conscience and fear God, and suffer for his Name ; or else turn meer Mercenary Runagadoes, and neither fear God or regard man, but become wholly the Devils Servants for your Bellies, and have the just reward of Eternal Vengeance, in everlasting burning in Hell fire, for ever and ever.

*Pr. Why Conscience, this is exceeding sad and miserable indeed, but is there no way for bringing in of Unity amongst the Godly and most Religious people, though we have been divided one against another, yet that now in this general Calamity, we might be of one heart, to cry, unto God that he may help us in this great distresse:*

*Conf.* It is very hard, and you will as hardly ever be brought unto it, for you have so long raged against the Innocent, and have smote them with the tongue, and with the fist of wickedness, in all your Fasts and Feasts and Solemn Assemblies ; that now it is much to be feared, you are given up to hardness of heart, and so not capable of true Repentance,

B

being

being the avowed enemies of the Light, by which you must see the evil of your own hearts, for which Gods displeasure is against you, and so you would run to him with your Prayers, whether he hear you or no, and the sin that separates you and your prayers from God unrepented of; But until you have thoroughly repented of, and are washed from these crying sins and great abominations, and become really vile in your own eyes, God doth not regard your Prayers, neither doth your cry come unto him, and while you seek unity with Gods people for your own ends, this also is abominable, for if you had your ends before you have truly repented and your hearts changed, you would destroy them with a greater destruction, therefore this cannot help you.

*Pr.* Why then Conscience what shall we do? we must fly, leave our Country, and seek refuge in other Nations, as our Brethren used to do heretofore, we shall never abide here in peace.

*Conf.* Why this was the manner in dayes of old, the Higeling would fly when the Wolf came, the Sheep are not his

his own, he cannot lay down his life; nay  
 skin for skin, and all that a man hath  
 will he give for his life; what is he that  
 can lay down his life for the profession of  
 Religion when he hath lost a good Con-  
 science, had you but a good Conscience,  
 and did indeed suffer for the Tryal of  
 your Faith, how bold would it make  
 you; but the sinners in *Sion* are afraid,  
 fearfulness surprizeth the Hypocrite, and  
 now you would fly and leave your flocks  
 to perish, under the mouths of those Pa-  
 stors whom you believe cannot feed  
 them, though they can fleece them as  
 you have done; But however, this I will  
 tell thee, Go whether thou wilt, I will  
 be with thee, now I am sent to plead with  
 thee; If thou art upon thy Bed, I will be  
 with thee; If thou art shut up in thy se-  
 cret Chamber, there also shall I find thee;  
 upon the Seas I shall be in thy Bosome;  
 and whether or into what Country canst  
 thou go from me? if sorrow come upon  
 thee, then am I at hand to remember  
 thee; if thy heart enter into mirth, to  
 put my remembrance out of mind, then  
 shall madness possess thee; folly, destru-  
 ction, bitterness and anguish of soul be  
 thy

thy latter end; if hoary hairs come upon thy head, they shall be dishonorable; when wrinkled brows hang over thy hollow eyes, then shall thy polluted heart trouble thee sore; and when thy withered cheeks sink into thy toothless jaws, and the weaknes of thy breath not able to drive thy spittle from thy mouth, then shall horror and amazement seize upon thee; and when all thy senses fail, and limbs grow feeble, and thy now delicate body become a rotten stinking carcase, oh then when the glory and strength of thy outward man grows weaker and weaker, then shall I appear stronger and stronger; then shall death stand as a ghastly image before thee, and his terror which thou shalt feel in thy Conscience shall afright thee, and when this world can afford thee no pleasure nor content, what then wouldest thou give for a good conscience, when all thy formal Prayers, Hypocritical Fasts and Feasts, made in thy day of thy pride and fulness, when thou wert lifted up in thy own conceit, and sat as a Queen, and said in thy heart, thou shouldest never see sorrow, when all these shall be spread as dung upon your Faces, and



and the sting of sin (which in the day of the committing thereof, thou boasted of its being taken away) shall be awakened, and as a fire that never shall be quenched shall burn within thee, and the worm that never dies begin to gnaw, and all thy Cruelty, Pride, Covetousnesse, Wrath and Envy, which thou in the day of thy prosperity livedst in, shall be again read unto thee, in the Book of thy Conscience, Oh then what would thou give for a good Conscience, all the World for a good Conscience; then shalt thou remember the many pretious Warnings and Visitations thou hast had, and the many reproofs and secret smitings thou hast felt in thy Conscience, and thou hast slighted it, and Persecuted, and Imprisoned, and Murthered the Just, and he hath not resisted thee, then if thou call again the dayes that are past, that thou might then gain time for Repentance, but now too late, this cannot ease thee, Sorrow, Anguish and Bitternesse doth compass thee about, one misery upon another, and one woe and torment upon another, & all to aggravate thy Condemnation, and this is the portion of them  
that

that forget God, and keep not their Conscience void of offence, but for the love of the World or fear of mans wrath, deny their Principles towards God; whereof they are perswaded in their Consciences, and so commit sin against the Law of God, as to them they are perswaded in their hearts. Oh now while thou have yet time remember me, it may be God may be entreated for thee, be not now proud and disdainful; but be low and humble, and learn wisdom betimes; and thus much for the present; Consider of what I have said until we meet again:

I. C.

Oh Priest, thy fiery Zeal hath made  
 a fool  
 Of thee, that thou hadst need to go to  
 School  
 To learn to plead with Conscience 'gainst  
 thy sin,  
 Which thou so proudly long hast lived

Ent

But now the time is come, when thou  
and I,

May both in Prison for our Conscience  
lie,

And there may reason what the matter  
was,

And how these things so strangely came  
to pass,

That we together should so near be  
brought,

That were so far asunder as we  
thought.

FINIS.